FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT

- · Also known as PRIMARY SOURCES.
- A description of an event told by someone who was actually there, experienced it, witnessed it, participated in it, and/or lived during it.
- These texts tell about something as it was happening.
- The person writing the text is a part of the events.

Depending on the text type:

- It may be written in first-person using I, me, my or second-person using you, your, yours.
- The author may include personal opinions, strong emotions, and descriptive anecdotes on the event— without necessarily any proof that it happened that way.
- It's typically viewed as more credible (i.e., a firsthand witness versus a secondhand researcher).



I was there when it happened.

Common text types:

- · Diaries, journals
- · Letters, Artifacts
- Original transcripts
- Legal documents, original records
- · Autobiographies

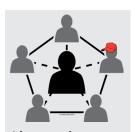
Advantages & Strengths:

- Provides a window into social, scientific, and political thoughts from a previous time period produced by people who lived during that time.
- Original material is untarnished and intact. It has not been interpreted/misinterpreted by anyone. The reader can make his own inferences.
- Can generally be tracked and attributed back to the original creator, giving greater weight to the points being referenced.

Disadvantages & Limitations:

- They may be incomplete (e.g., missing parts or pages).
- They may be unusable (e.g., illegible writing, poor quality audio recording, etc.).
- They may lack context to grasp the full extent of what is being said.
- The reader applies his own knowledge and interpretation and it may be insufficient or inaccurate.

SECONDHAND ACCOUNT



I know a lot about the people who were there.

Common text types:

- Biographies
- Encyclopedia entries
- Textbooks
- Academic journals

IDITAND ACCOUNT

- · Also known as SECONDARY SOURCES.
- A description of an event told by someone who was NOT there, did NOT experience it, did NOT witness it, did NOT participate in it, and/or did NOT live during it.
- These texts tell about something that happened in the past.
- The person writing the text usually has read and researched a lot about the event.

Depending on the text type:

- It is always written in third-person using he, she, they, them.
- The author may remain reasonably neutral in their presentation of the facts (i.e., informative writing).
- The author may argue a point or try to persuade the reader of a particular opinion supporting his claims with evidence (i.e., argumentative writing).

Advantages & Strengths:

- Written by someone who adds interpretation, explanation, context, and background about a primary source. This is valuable for the less knowledgeable reader.
- Usually includes information drawn from several sources, demonstrating it coincides with wellaccepted opinions by experts on the topic.

Disadvantages & Limitations:

- The reader is always viewing the original material through the lens of someone else's perspective, including their interpretation, experiences, and biases.
- Includes heavy doses of information (stats, dates, explanations), sometimes coming off as dry and boring to the average reader.
- Who is deemed an expert and what is accepted as truth evolves as new primary sources are discovered. The reader must carefully scrutinize who wrote it before blindly accepting what he wrote.
- Since it's not an authentic or original source, readers should consider secondary sources for explanations and interpretations of events— not evidence for them.